

# LIVING ORTHODOXY



**Saint Philaret of New York**

*An Appeal for Books from Eastern Orthodox Books  
Also in this issue...*

*St. Boniface, Bishop of Ferentum: Life & Liturgical Service*

*St. Philaret of New York:*

*Sermons on the Forefathers and the Nativity*

*Archbishop Averky:*

*Are the Terms Christian and Orthodox Accurate in our Times?*

*Concerning the Holy Mysteries*

*St. John Chrysostom:*

*Sermon on the Nativity of Our Lord*

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# LIVING ORTHODOXY

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**HIS GRACE, AGAFANGEL,**  
**Metropolitan of New York & Eastern America**  
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## APPEAL FOR BOOKS

The recently reposed Fr. Vladimir Anderson, who for many years provided reprints of obscure and out of print texts of Orthodox interest, shortly before his death expressed his wish that the Press would continue his work. His intention that the remaining materials in his home/shop should be delivered to SJKP has not been fulfilled. While we already have many of those texts, either available for sale or in the library here pending new editions, there are quite a number of which we do not have a copy. A list of needed titles follows. We hope that amongst our readers a copy of each may be located. If you have the ability to make a photocopy (or pdf scan), please share it with us. If not, please be so good as to loan us your copy (which will be promptly returned) for copying here. A pdf copy of this list will be posted in "Resources and Downloads" on the Press website ([sjkp.org](http://sjkp.org)) and updated as we acquire the needed materials. We are aware that there are numerous books from EOB which are *not* in this list, apparently having been once available, then discontinued. Needless to say, we would like to acquire copies of them as well.

Mystical Writing of St. Isaac the Syrian

Exhortation to Martyrdom; St. Cyprian of Carthage

The Glory of Martyrdom; St. Cyprian of Carthage

Jealousy and Envy; St. Cyprian of Carthage

Patience; St. Cyprian of Carthage

Spiritual Notes; St. Isaac the Syrian

Spiritual Direction: Letters of St. Marcarius of Optina

On Following Our Lord Jesus Christ

Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov

Spiritual Struggles of the Early Ascetics

Selections from the Lausiac History

*(continued on p. 24)*

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## **THE LIFE OF ST. BONIFACE, BISHOP OF FERENTUM IN TUSCANY**

### **DRAWN FROM THE *DIALOGUES* OF ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE OF ROME**

St. Boniface was a man of holy life, who by his virtuous conversation well discharged his duty. Of his many miracles, the priest Gaudentius, who was brought up by him, is the still living witness.

His bishopric was quite poor (a thing which for good men is the preserver of humility). He had nothing else for his revenues but one vineyard, which had at one time been so spoiled by a hail-storm that only a few grapes remained. Seeing what had happened, Boniface gave thanks to God that he had sent him further poverty. When the time came that the few remaining grapes were ripe, he appointed someone, as was the custom, to keep his vineyard, asking him to watch over it carefully.

When the time came, he asked his nephew, the priest Constantius, to make ready, as they had before, all the barrels and wine-vessels they had. When his nephew understood this, he marveled that he had asked such a mad thing as to make ready the vessels for the wine, as he had no wine at all to put in them. But he did not dare to inquire why he gave such an order, but did as had been requested, and made all the vessels and other things ready, as they had always done before.

Then the poor man of God caused the remnant of grapes to be gathered and carried to the wine-press. Sending all the others away, he himself tarried there with a small boy, whom he commanded to tread those grapes. When he perceived that a little wine began to run forth, the man of God took it, put it into a little vessel, and poured some of it into all the other barrels and vessels which had been made ready, as it were to bless them with that small quantity. When he had done so, he called straightway for the priest, asking him to send for the poor, upon whose coming the wine in the press began to increase and run out so plentifully that it filled all the pots and other vessels which they had brought.

When they were all served, he bade the boy to stop treading and come down. Then, locking up the storehouse into which he had put his own vessels and setting his own seal upon the door, he went to the church. Three days later, he called Constantius.

Having said a few prayers, he opened the door. He found all the vessels into which he had before poured but a very little liquor working so plentifully that, if he had not then come, they would have run all over the floor. Then he straightway commanded his kinsman the priest not to reveal this miracle to any, so long as he lived, fearing that the outward opinion of men might through vainglory inwardly injure his soul. In this he followed the example of our master Christ Who, to teach us humility, commanded His disciples concerning Himself not to tell any what they had seen, until the Son of Man should be risen again from death.

When He restored sight to the two blind men, our Savior commanded them to tell no one. But they, of course, made this miracle known throughout the country. He made this command (and others like it) for the sake of the example of humility; but of course He knew that it could not be concealed; that, for the good of others, it must become known. His chosen servants must follow his teaching, desiring that any thing from which glory might arise to themselves should not be known. Yet should it so fall out that these good deeds cannot be concealed, even contrary to their desire, they will yet have followed his example.

Another time, on the feast-day of St. Proculus the martyr (30 July), one Fortunatus, a nobleman who dwelt in that town, heartily entreated St. Boniface that, after he had celebrated the liturgy, he would vouchsafe to come unto his house, to bless his meat and dine with him. So charitably invited, the man of God was content to fulfill this request. When the liturgy was completed he went thither. But even before the table was blessed, suddenly (as some men by such means get their living), someone came to the gate with an ape, who began to play upon an instrument. Hearing this, the holy man was discontented and said: "Alas, alas, this wretched man is dead, this wretched man is dead. Behold, I have come hither to dinner and have not yet opened my lips to praise God, and he is here with his ape, playing upon his instrument." Then

he asked them to give him some meat and drink. "Yet I would have you know," he said, "that he is a dead man." When the unhappy wretch had filled himself and was going out at the gate, a great stone fell from the house and broke his head. From this blow he fell down and was taken away half dead. The next day, as the man of God had said, he departed this life.

We must consider how holy men ought to be revered with fear, for they are without question the temples of God. When a holy man is moved to anger, Who is then moved but He Who dwells in that temple?

At another time, his nephew the priest Constantius had sold his horse for twelve crowns, which money he laid up in his chest. While he was abroad about other business, certain poor people pitifully begged the holy bishop to bestow something upon them for the relief of their needs. Having nothing to give them, the man of God was much grieved to send them away empty-handed. But while he was so troubled, it came to his mind how his nephew had sold his horse, and that the money was in his chest. So, in his absence, by virtuous violence he broke open the lock, took the twelve crowns, and gave them, as best pleased himself, to the poor people. When Constantius returned home he found the chest open and looked for his money. Not finding it, he began with great noise and fury to cry out against his uncle: "All others can live here in quiet; only I can not!" Hearing him crying out in such a manner, the bishop came unto him, as also the rest of his family. When he began with sweet speech to try to mitigate his anger, in great fury he replied: "All others can live with you; only I can not be suffered to be in quiet. Give me my money, which you have taken out of my chest."

Moved at his words, the bishop departed and went to the church of the blessed virgin Mary where, lifting up his hands with his vestment upon them, he began standing to pray that she would help him to so much money, that he might quiet the fury of the irate priest. Casting his eyes upon the garment which lay stretched out between his arms, he found twelve crowns lying there, so fair and bright, as if they had newly come from the mint. Forthwith going out of the church, he cast them to

the raging priest with these words: "Lo! there is your money for which you have made such a stir. But know that after my death you shall never be bishop of this place, and that for your covetous mind." By this censure, we gather that the priest had intended that money to be used to obtain the bishopric. The words of the man of God did prevail: Constantius ended his life without any further advancement than the dignity of the priesthood.

Another time, two Goths came to him for hospitality, saying that they were traveling to Ravenna. He gave them with his own hands a little wooden bottle full of wine — enough, haply, for their dinner. But they drank of that wine until they had reached Ravenna. Though they stayed some days in that city, yet they had no wine other than that which the holy man had bestowed upon them. Likewise, they continued until they returned again to the same venerable bishop, drinking daily of the same, yet never lacking wine to serve their need. It was as if in that wooden bottle which he gave them wine had grown.

Not long after, there came from the same country a certain old man, a cleric, who reported divers notable things concerning him, which must not be passed over in silence. He related that one day when Boniface went into his garden he found it full of caterpillars. Seeing all his potherbs spoiled, turning himself to them he said "I adjure you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to depart hence, and not to eat any more of these plants." After these words, the worms did forthwith vanish, such that there was not one to be found in the whole garden. But what great marvel is it to hear such things reported of him who was now a bishop and, by reason of his orders and also holy conversation of life, grown in favor with almighty God, seeing those are more to be admired which this old clergyman said he had done when he was yet a little boy?

For he affirms that, when Boniface yet dwelt with his mother and went out he sometimes came home without his shirt, and often without his coat. For no sooner did he see a naked man, than he gave away his clothes and put them upon him, that he himself might be clothed with a reward in the sight of God. His mother rebuked him often for doing



so, telling him that it was unreasonable that, being poor himself, he should give away his clothing to others.

Another day, going into the barn, she found that almost all her wheat, which she had provided for the whole year, had been given away by her son to the poor. As she was, out of grief, beating and tearing at herself, the child of God Boniface came, and with the best words he could find began to comfort his afflicted mother. When by no means would she be quieted, he entreated her to go out of the barn where was the little wheat which remained. When she had gone, the virtuous youth fell straightway to his prayers. After a while he went out and brought his mother back again, and she found the barn as full of wheat as it had been before. At the sight of such a miracle she, being touched in soul, exhorted him to give as he pleased, seeing he could so soon obtain at God's hands what he asked.

His mother also kept hens before her door, which a fox, which had his den not far off, used to carry away. On a certain day, as the youth Boniface was standing in the entry, the fox, after his old manner, came and took away one of the hens. In all haste, he ran to the church. Prostrate there in prayer, with a loud voice he spake thus: "Is it Thy

pleasure, O Lord, that I shall not eat of my mother's hens? For behold, the fox doth devour them." Rising from his prayers, he went out of the church. Straightway the fox came back with the hen in his mouth, left her where he had found her, and forthwith fell down dead in the presence of Boniface.

Strange as it may seem that God so attend to such small matters in the prayers of those who put their trust in Him, this is to the end that by little things which we receive at His hands, we should hope for greater. The holy and simple lad was heard in his prayers for small matters, that by them he should know how much he ought to trust in God, when he prayed for things of greater importance.

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Adapted from *The Dialogues of Saint Gregory, surnamed the Great*, Pope of Rome and the first of that name. Divided into four books, wherein he entreateth of the lives and miracles of the saints in Italy and of the eternity of men's souls. Translated into our English tongue by P. W. and printed at Paris in 1608. Re-edited, with an introduction and notes by Edmond G. Gardner (London: P.L. Warner, 1911), Book I, Chapter 9. A print-on-demand reprint is available from Evolution Books.

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## **THE 19<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIERARCH BONIFACE THE MERCIFUL, BISHOP OF FERENTUM IN TUSCANY**

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*(This service is designed to be combined with that of the Martyr Boniface.)*

### **AT VESPERS**

*On "Lord, I have cried..." , 6 stichera: 3 of the Martyr Boniface (see in the Menaion), and 3 of the Holy Hierarch Boniface, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs..." —*

Meek and lowly of heart on earth, O wondrous Boniface, in heaven thou intercedest with great boldness before the throne of glory, entreating mercy from the Judge of all for us who with faith call on thine aid; for having run the good race of the virtues and triumphed in thy trials, thou hast received from Christ the crown of victory.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath the Lord perfected praise, as saith the Psalmist; and his words found fulfillment in the child Boniface, who, rebuked for giving all the food of his household to the needy, prayed to Christ most earnestly. And, lo! by the power of the Almighty the stores were wondrously replenished in a moment.

Christ the Redeemer gave His life to ransom our souls from sin and death; and, following His precepts, Boniface, His servant, gave all his substance to relieve the sufferings of the poor and to feed the hungry. Wherefore, in heaven he hath received the power to pray for all who call upon his name, obtaining from God peace and great mercy.

*Glory...: Idiomelon, in the same tone—*

All Italy boasteth in thy glory, O saint of God; and Tuscany exulteth exceedingly in thy memory. For therein thou wast like a lily sprung up amid thorns, bearing witness to the beauty of paradise. And, lo! the sweet fragrance of thy manifold virtues filleth the souls of us Christians, moving us to give glory unto Christ, Who hath given us such a high priest, who beggeth forgiveness for our sins and transgressions.

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign..."—*

Beholding Christ, Who loveth mankind, crucified, O all-pure one, His side pierced by a spear, thou didst cry aloud, weeping: "What is this, O my Son? How hath the ungrateful people rewarded Thee for the good Thou didst do them? And dost Thou hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? I marvel, O Compassionate One, at Thy voluntary crucifixion!"

*Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone I—*

Come, all ye who love the saints of God! Come and join chorus together, fashioning praises into wreaths wherewith to crown the honored head of the merciful Boniface! For, having armed himself with faith in Christ, he bravely entered upon the contest of the virtues, by his meekness utterly casting down the pride of the enemy of our race, and by his patience trampling down all the passions. Wherefore, having become a model and example for hierarchs, he prayeth now in behalf of our souls.

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven..."—*

Standing before the Cross of thy Son and God, and beholding His long-suffering, weeping, thou didst say, O pure Mother: "Woe is me, O my Child most sweet! What are these things which Thou dost suffer unjustly, O Word of God, that Thou mightest save humanity?"

*Troparion of the saint, in Tone I—*

From thy childhood, O venerable hierarch, thou didst love Christ the Master above all; and, desiring to serve Him alone, thou wast ever mindful of His teaching, that he who serveth the poor and needy serveth God Almighty. Wherefore, having acquired true charity through meekness and humility, thou dost work wondrous miracles for the faithful; for which cause we cry unto thee: Save us by thine entreaties, O Boniface, namesake of goodly deeds.

## AT MATINS

*At "God is the Lord..." the troparion of the martyr, twice; Glory..., that of the holy hierarch; Now & ever..., theotokion.*

*One canon from the Octoechos, with 6 troparia, including the irmos; canon of the martyr, with 4 troparia (see in the Menaion); and that of the holy hierarch, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is "We hymn Boniface, the doer of good deeds", in Tone VIII—*

## ODE I

*Irmos:* Let us chant unto God, Who delivered Israel from the bitter bondage of Pharaoh, and guided them with the pillar of fire and the cloud of light, for He hath been glorified.

Wisdom and eloquence do Thou grant me, Thy lowly servant, O Christ, that, filled with Thy grace, as a lamp with oil, I may glorify Boniface who glorified Thee.

Ever didst thou cherish as the treasure of thy soul, O divinely wise hierarch Boniface, the saving precept of Jesus Christ: Give unto every man that asketh of thee.

How great is thy reward in heaven, O merciful one! For, having distributed thy raiment among those clad in rags, thou art now arrayed in the splendor of holiness.

*Theotokion:* Ye slaves to sin, suffering in thrall to unseemly passions, cast off the bondage of the noetic Pharaoh, and follow the most pure Theotokos, our most glorious Directress.



### ODE III

*Irmos:* O Savior, Thou art my confirmation, my refuge and power! Make firm my wavering heart in the fear of Thee, for there is none as holy as Thou, our God.

Making thy heart firm in Christ the Savior, O Boniface, by His power thou didst wondrously increase thy wine, crying: There is none as holy as Thou, our God!

“None is as holy as Thou, O Christ, Who didst change water into wine at Cana, and hast now wrought a marvelous wonder over mine own wine!” cried the saint.

Boniface, filled with the Spirit, was affronted by a fool, who even before the meal had been blessed, set his ape to capering; and the saint sadly foretold his doom.

*Theotokion:* O Mistress, thou refuge of Christians, shelter us beneath thy protecting veil, like as a hen shieldeth her chicks; for after God there in none as holy as thou.

*Kontakion of the martyr (see in the Menaion, after Ode VI)*

*Sessional hymn of the Martyr (see in the Menaion, after Ode III)*

*Glory...: Sessional hymn of the holy hierarch, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: “Having been lifted up...”*—

Treating the world and all things therein as naught, O Boniface, thou didst heed the Master’s teachings and didst struggle most zealously in meekness and humble-mindedness. Wherefore, thou hast received recompense a hundredfold and the reward of the life that groweth not old, O glorious hierarch.

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or stavrotheotokion (see both in the Menaion, after Ode III)*

### ODE IV

*Irmos:* With divine vision the prophet perceived Thee, O Word, Who wast to become incarnate of the Theotokos alone, the mountain overshadowed; and with fear he glorified Thy power.

“Now do I behold a miracle like that which was wrought in Thy temple, O Lord, when a little oil burned for many days!” the holy one cried aloud, seeing the increase of his vintage.

In Egypt, worms and locusts fell upon the crops, that Pharaoh might know the power of the true God; but thou, O saint, didst set at naught the rapacity of such creatures by thy faith in Him.

Feeding upon the fruits of the holy one’s garden, ravenous worms devoured his substance with greed unabated; but he expelled them by the power of Him Who is most glorious.

*Theotokion:* Astray in the trackless wilderness of temptations, beset on every side by the beasts of the soul-corrupting passions, let us hasten to Mary, the mountain overshadowed by grace divine.

### ODE V

*Irmos:* Grant us peace, O Lord our God. O Lord our God, take us for Thy possession. O Lord, we know none other than Thee; we call upon Thy name.

Christ filled thy soul with ineffable peace, O most blessed one, and for thy faith and virtues He hearkeneth when thou callest upon His name.

Every possession didst thou treat as naught, O merciful one, and love of material things had no hold upon thy heart, for the poor were thy treasure.

Take pity upon us, O holy hierarch, and beseech the Lord to grant us His peace, for we have none other God than He, by Whose name we are called.

*Theotokion:* How will our souls, vexed and troubled day and night, find peace, O Lady? But ease thou our trials and tribulations, for we call upon thy name.

### ODE VI

*Irmos:* As Thou didst deliver Thy prophet from the whale, O our Savior, deliver me also from the multitude of my transgressions.

Imitating Elijah and the widow’s cruse of oil, Boniface caused a little bottle of wine to last throughout a lengthy journey.

Deliver us from the fiery lake, from the torments of Tartarus and Gehenna, from the worm that sleepeth not, O saint of God.

O holy hierarch, namesake of good works, lift from us the weight of our transgressions, that we may glorify our Savior.

*Theotokion:* Ever encompassed by bestial temptations, O Queen, we cry out to thee, as did Jonah from the belly of the whale: Deliver us!

*Kontakion of the holy hierarch, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin..."*—

Following the precepts of Christ the Savior, Who multiplied loaves and fishes to feed the hungry, in the purity of thy soul thou didst do likewise, O Boniface, wondrously feeding the poor, therein imitating thy Master, the preëternal God.

*Ikos:* Full of pity and compassion for the needy, Boniface showed himself worthy to be called merciful, for like Christ our God he hath compassion for all. Wherefore, mindful that we are impoverished in the virtues, let us fervently beseech him to obtain heavenly riches for us through his supplications, and to fill our starving hearts with the words of salvation; and let us cry aloud to him: O divinely wise hierarch, as of old thou didst clothe the naked and feed the hungry, so do thou nurture our souls, imitating thy Master, the preëternal God.

#### ODE VII

*Irmos:* Quenching the most destructive power of the Chaldæan furnace, the youths cried out to the Creator, Who had descended in the form of an angel: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Rebuked by thy mother when thou gavest away all her food, O saint, thou didst fill her with awe when, thou having prayed to the Lord, she found her larder full, crying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

O the care of the merciful Boniface! For, pitying his mother's poverty, he rebuked the fox that was devouring her hens; and in joy she cried aloud: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Foul greed and the hateful furnace of the passions could not burn the heart of the holy Boniface, for within him dwelt Christ the Word, the Angel of great Counsel, the blessed and praised God of our fathers.

*Theotokion:* Glorifying thee, the Queen of the

angels, O Mary, we cry out with fervor: Free us from the flames of the passions, that we may chant to thy Son: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

#### ODE VIII

*Irmos:* Him Who was begotten of the Father before time began, and became incarnate of His Mother in latter days, do ye hymn, O priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O ye priests, cry aloud in exaltation, praising our incarnate God Who in His love for mankind hath given us so holy an intercessor! Ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O ye people, lift up your voices in gladness, knowing that the holy Boniface ever prayeth to God for us sinners! O priests, hymn ye the only-begotten Son of the heavenly Father!

Distressed by their plight, the saint meted out to the poor gold coins of his kinsman; and when rebuked by the covetous one, he received gold of the Theotokos and repaid the alms.

*Theotokion:* Descending into the immaculate womb of the Virgin, the only-begotten Son of the unoriginate Father took flesh of her for our sake. O ye people, exalt her supremely for all ages!

#### ODE IX

*Irmos:* Every ear trembleth to hear of the ineffable condescension of God, for the Most High willingly came down even to the flesh, becoming man through the Virgin's womb. Wherefore we, the faithful, magnify the all-pure Theotokos.

Every ear is filled with awe when it heareth of the mighty works God hath deigned to work through thee because of thy humility and meekness, O wonderworker; and gathering together for thy memorial, we magnify thee.

Entering into the glory of thy Lord in the heavens, O Boniface, thy face shining with the splendor of divine grace, never cease to make entreaty most earnestly in behalf of all those who with faith celebrate thy holy memory.

Descending to our lowly state in His boundless condescension, the Word of God clothed Himself in flesh through the Virgin's womb. Him do thou continually magnify, O saint, as thou standest with the angels at His throne on high.



*Theotokion*: Standing in glory at the right hand of the Most High, thy Son and Lord, O all-pure Theotokos, thou dost worship Him incarnate, Who took flesh of thee that He might save man. Wherefore, we all magnify thee, the Virgin Mother of God.

*Exapostilarion of the holy hierarch: Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women..."—*

Hearken, ye Christians, to the sound of rejoicing! The angels sing forth in jubilation, for the soul of Boniface, the holy hierarch of their Lord and King, hath ascended to heaven and with them joineth chorus, glorifying the Trinity, the Author of all creation.

*Theotokion—*

Divinely wise virgins, standing round about thee like queens by birth, O Mary Theotokos, are brought as brides before thy Son, the King of all, O all-pure one. Him do thou entreat in our behalf, O Virgin Mother and Maiden.

*Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the holy hierarch, in Tone II—*

Be glad, ye who love the Lord Jesus! Rejoice, O holy hierarchs! Lift up your voices, O ye righteous! Hold festival, ye venerable! And leap up in spirit, O great Gregory, beholding the divine exaltation of the lowly Boniface of whose life thou didst write, for he is wondrous in holiness and with great boldness entreateth the King of kings!

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree..."—*

Enduring many pangs at the crucifixion of thy Son and God, O all-pure one, thou didst groan, weeping and exclaiming: "Woe is me, O my sweet Child! How is it that Thou dost suffer unjustly, desiring to deliver mortals born of Adam?" Wherefore, O all-pure Virgin, we beseech thee with faith: Render Him merciful unto us.

## AT LITURGY

*Prokimenon, in Tone I—*

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

*Stichos*: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

## EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS §151

Brethren: The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that One and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

*Alleluia, in Tone II—*

*Stichos*: Give heed, O my people, to my law; incline your ear unto the words of my mouth.

*Stichos*: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter dark sayings which have been from the beginning.

## GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN §36

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."

*Communion Verse—*

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

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## SERMON ON THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

*St. Philaret of New York*

And now, brethren, we are approaching, as in previous years, the great feast of the Nativity of Christ; and our Church, in preparing us for a worthy celebration of this great feast, today reminds us of the ancestors of our Lord, the holy forefathers, of the righteous men of the Old Testament who lived in pre-Christian times.

What they knew about God was perhaps one one hundredth of that which all of us know, but they obtained salvation through faith in that Messiah, the Savior Who was STILL TO COME, and other than the prophecies in the Old Testament and in Old Testament sacred Scriptures, which besides were at times even difficult to understand, in essence they knew nothing. Yet in front of us the entire truth of the knowledge of God is revealed, for the Son of God came down from heaven to earth and granted us the light of truth and Knowledge of God, worshipped in the Trinity.

The Church, I repeat, reminds us of these Old Testament righteous ones. Among them, in first place stands that forefather, the father of us all — the first created man, Adam, whom sinners often refer to in justifying their own sins. They say: we are the descendants of sinful Adam, and therefore, what is surprising in the fact that we sin? After all, our forefather was a sinner! Those who speak this way, in place of repentance, hide behind Adam's sin from the rightful judgment of God, which they will ultimately face for their own sins. Yes, Adam sinned, but through his entire life he brought repentance. And since the kingdom of heaven will be filled with repentant sinners (for there are no sinless people), then the first among these righteous ones is the forefather Adam. When a person says that he sins because he is a descendant of Adam, then let him ask his conscience: can one use this to justify one's sins? After all, during every moment of our sinful action we are completely aware that if we wished, then we could be able not to sin. For on this is repentance completely based. If a man did not have free will and sinned unwillingly, by compulsion, then the Lord would not require any answer from him. But when we sin, we are perfectly aware

of what we are doing; and when we repent and confess our sins, in reflecting upon the committed sin, we perfectly understand that we could have not done it, yet we did and therefore we condemn ourselves and ask for mercy and forgiveness from the Lord. Even though we have inherited the disease of sin, a tendency toward sin from Adam, with the help of divine grace each one of us could, at any moment during sin, refrain from it. Look at the holy fathers, great righteous ones — they too, as we know, were sinful people similar to us, yet with the help of divine grace they became victors over sin and became holy, "earthly angels and heavenly men." The Church remembers not only Adam, but his wife, Eve, who, although she was the first sinner who enticed Adam, was also the mother of the human race, and that enticement which she brought in, as the Church says, was corrected by the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. If the fall came through Eve, then from the blessed Virgin came life and eternal blessedness, eternal joy.

We know of other righteous ones as well: Noah, who remained faithful amidst overall perversion, and was saved from the world-wide flood. Righteous Enoch, who lived in Old Testament times and did not have the grace of the New Testament, so pleased God that the Lord took him to Himself from this sinful earth NOT having died. We remember Abraham, the father of believers. What a touching, nothing short of astounding event, when the powerful faith of the great forefather is recounted in the Holy Bible! Finally, by God's promise, already in old age, a son, Isaac is born to him — the child of his fatherly love and fatherly hopes. And suddenly the Lord says to him: take your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go and sacrifice him to Me on the mountain which I shall indicate to you. I repeat, for Abraham, all of his fatherly hopes and all his love were in Isaac. But he does not waver for one second: as the Lord has spoken, so must it be! Without even a shadow of any wavering or doubts in the goodness of God, knowing that the Lord does no evil thing, but all that He does is good and beautiful, the father of



believers takes Isaac and all that is necessary to carry out the sacrifice and sets out to the mountain.

While he was going through mountain passes and approached the mountain Moriah, the Lord said to him: This is the mountain. Abraham leaves his fellow travelers — servants, who were carrying all the necessary things, laid Isaac on the wood for sacrifice and began to go up the mountain. But don't forget: Abraham was a real human being. This was a dreadful feat for him. It was as if he nailed his living son to the cross of obedience to God, because he was so prepared to carry out the Lord's will that in his mind and heart Isaac was as if already dead. And at that moment, when his father's love was in such grief, what's more, Isaac asks the question: "Father?" "What, child" says Abraham. "We have everything — wood and fire" (which they were carrying with them because at the time there were no matches and fire was acquired with difficulty and kept burning), "but where is the lamb we need to make the sacrifice?" And although this question was like a knife in the heart, Abraham, with unshakable resolve answers him: "God will find for Himself a lamb for sacrifice, my son." They ascended the mountain and built the altar. Abraham ties up his son and places him on the wood. Since Abraham was the son of obedience, likewise was his son Isaac; Isaac was young, full of strength, he could have pushed his father aside and run away, but he does no such thing and obediently submits. And the only reason the father ties him down is that he could purely by instinct, seeing the knife raised over him, do something to the contrary.

Abraham placed his son on the altar — raised the terrible knife... but a second before he would have brought it down on the body of his son, he heard the voice of an angel: "Abraham, Abraham, do not raise your hand on the youth, for the Lord says: I saw your obedience and faith, and the Lord further says: "By Myself have I sworn (for there is nothing in the world higher than God) that in blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thee." And at this moment, for Abraham, as the holy fathers say, Isaac indeed as if rose from the dead, because in his heart, Abraham had already sacrificed him. And therefore, this sacrifice was a prefiguration of that great sacrifice, in which God the Father gave His Only Begotten and Beloved

Son to be sacrificed on the altar of the cross for the sins of the whole world. But the redemptive sacrifice did not stop there, and the Son of God in His incarnation as God Man crucified Himself on the cross and died for us sinners. And it is this strength of faith and dedication to the Lord's will of which the Holy Bible speaks which made Abraham what Apostle Paul called him, saying that Abraham is the father of all of us who are believers.

But we know of other examples of similar sacrifice. Here is one of them: Once the great man of prayer and righteous one, father John of Kronstadt, already a priest at the time, but still young, fell ill. Yet it was the Great Lent. Doctors require that the patient eat meat dishes; otherwise he would weaken and die. Father John does not agree; finally he says, probably foreseeing the result: "My mother raised me in obedience to the Church and keeping the holy fasts. She is alive — I will ask her. If she, as my mother, gives me permission, then I agree." A letter is written to her with the question. The response is received: "Beloved son, I give you my maternal blessing, and ask your pastoral blessing, but to eat non-lenten food during the fast I do not permit under any circumstance. The doctors say that you will die — then die. One has to die anyway, but do not violate obedience to the Church." Did not this mother likewise bring her beloved son as a sacrifice for the sake of obedience to the Church?

Among other righteous ones of the Old Testament, the Church today remembers the great prophet Daniel, the prophet and God-seer Moses, and the three holy youths who went bravely into the fiery furnace, were miraculously delivered from destruction and thereby were glorified forever. At every matins service in the eighth and ninth songs of the canon, the Church remembers these three youths and the great miracle which happened to them. All of these events pass before our eyes now as the great feast is approaching. And what great people these were! We are small children compared to them. But again I repeat: let us not forget that what they knew about God, His truth and about the spiritual life is much less than what we know. This exposes our laziness: it exposes it because that we are given much, but we strive to learn much



about insignificant things, but have little interest in what is most important. And therefore we do not know much of what every faithful son or daughter of the Church can and must know.

Therefore, brethren, in preparing to greet the great feast let us take care that we not be unlearned in our faith, in the teaching of the holy Church, and try to familiarize ourselves with all that the Church

teaches us so that we would be able to also defend our Faith and explain it to anyone who will ask about it. And then, when we are thus faithful to the Lord and will place His holy teaching and obedience to his Holy Law as most important, then we will be able to greet him as should be, to worship Him and to bring Him gifts pleasing to Him: faith, hope and Christian love! Amen!

## **SERMON ON THE DAY OF THE NATIVITY CHRIST**

*St. Philaret of New York*

Yesterday, brethren, the Holy Church related to us in the Gospel reading, how the shepherds received the news from the angels about the birth of the Savior of the world and hurried to the cave, the manger, and there they bowed down before Him. Today, we heard that, after the shepherds, other travelers came. The shepherds had been there, in Bethlehem, but these travelers came from afar; they had come from Babylon. Wise men had arrived. The shepherds were simple people, while these were educated sages, wise men, who had absorbed all of the knowledge of those times. But one must remember that sometimes on icons it is depicted that the shepherds approach the manger and bow down, and then almost immediately after them, the wise men approach. But this is incorrect. Those who were sent bowed down and worshipped in the cave, before the manger; but in today's Gospel reading it is said that when the wise men arrived, they then entered into a "house", into a dwelling. The Gospel says that when they arrived in Jerusalem, all Jerusalem was troubled and alarmed, and most of all was King Herod, because the wise men said: "Where is He Who is born King of the Jews?" It is clear that Herod immediately saw this King of the Jews as his own rival, for at the time Herod was the king of the Jews. In his evil heart an evil intent is immediately seen. He summons to himself all those who knew the law — the scribes and pharisees, who of course were among those who were troubled since all of Jerusalem was troubled, and to his question "where Christ should be born?", they answer directly: "In Bethlehem of Judæa" and they indicate to him the prophesy which speaks of

this. But although they said this to him, they made no effort themselves to verify whether indeed the King of the Jews had been born, and remained at home in Jerusalem. Herod sent the wise men off saying, go and find out everything and then I myself will go and worship him.

Good people are trusting. The wise men trusted in the good intentions of the king and departed. They rejoiced when they saw that the star which had brought them from the far east, proceeded here before them to Bethlehem and stopped exactly over the place where at the time the Divine Infant Christ dwelt. They brought Him gifts: gold, as is fit for a king; incense, as is fitting for God, and myrrh, for the One Who would be dead, having died for the entire world, as myrrh was used then to anoint the dead.

And what happens next shows the character of the wise men. They are given word in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, but should return directly to their land by another road, which they did. But if a good person sees everyone as being good, then an evil person sees everyone as evil. The wise men had no intention of deceiving the king; they merely were obedient to the voice from on high Which told them to go directly home. But Herod, as it is said in the Gospel, learned, that the wise men had slighted him, that the wise men had made a fool of him. Well, of course he must have thought this, since he would have done the same, probably. But the wise men had gone, and, as tradition has it, brought the good tidings of Christ to their distant Babylonian country.

The wise men brought the Savior their gifts.



We already spoke yesterday of how the Lord Who dwells in the heavens does not require of us now such a bringing of gifts as then. But our duty is to think about how we may receive this dear Guest and honor Him. The Lord Jesus Christ brought to earth His marvelous, sole, evangelical law. Unfortunately, when we speak of how it is necessary to fulfill the law of the Gospel, people often say: "There are so many commandments in it which are impossible to fulfill." And when they are asked: "Name some of them?" then they answer, indicating precisely those things which set the Gospel completely apart from all other religious and philosophical teachings: In the Gospel we are told: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who offend you, do good to those who cause you unpleasantness, because the Gospel is the law of love!

Our times, beloved ones, are terrible. Right now, we see coming to pass that which the Lord had foretold; that the time would come, when because of the "abounding of iniquity, the love of many would wax cold, would grow cold." And this is what we see today. What is our life becoming? It has already turned into some sort of nightmare, full of malice, falsehood, filth.... And it is becoming worse and worse in that regard, precisely because the world does not want to fulfill the holy law of the Gospel of Christ, but wishes to live according to its passions and caprices. But the Lord has brought His law, and according to this law He will judge us on the day of His Dread Judgment.

But now He lies before us as an Infant, and only waits that our souls should become aflame with a holy, blessed desire to fulfill His holy law, no matter what. Amen.

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## **ARE THE TERMS "CHRISTIAN" AND "ORTHODOX" ACCURATE IN OUR TIMES?**

*Archbishop Averky*

Until recently, the concepts and terms "Christian" and "Orthodox" were unambiguous and meaningful. Now, however, we are living through times so terrible, so filled with falsehood and deception, that such concepts and terms no longer convey what is significant when used without further clarification. They do not reflect the essence of things, but have become little more than deceptive labels.

Many societies and organizations now call themselves "Christian", although there is nothing Christian in them, insofar as they reject the principal dogma of Christianity — the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, as do several of the newest sects, to which the very spirit of Christianity, which follows so naturally and logically from the teaching of the Gospels, is generally quite foreign. Of late, the term "Orthodox" has also ceased in large measure to express what it should, for even those who in fact have apostatized from true Orthodoxy and become traitors to the Orthodox Faith and Church continue to call themselves "Orthodox".

Such are all the innovators, who reject the true spirit of Orthodoxy, all those who have started

down the path of mutual relations with the enemies of Orthodoxy, who propagandize common prayer and even liturgical communion with those who do not belong to the holy Orthodox Church. Such are the "renovationists" [members of the "Living Church" movement, sponsored by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s] and contemporary "neo-renovationists", the "neo-Orthodox" (as some of them openly style themselves!), who clamor about how essential it is to "renew the Orthodox Church", about some sort of "reforms in Orthodoxy" which has allegedly become "set in its ways" and "moribund". They harp on such things instead of focusing their prayerful attention on the truly essential renewal of their own souls and the fundamental reform of their own sinful nature with its passions and desires.

They insistently proclaim union with heretics, with non-Orthodox, and even with non-Christians. They proclaim "the union of all" — but without the unity of spirit and truth which alone makes such union possible. Such, for example, in our days are the Ecumenical Patriarchs of Constantinople, who in the past recognized the

*(continued on p. 26)*



## CONCERNING THE HOLY MYSTERIES

*This excellent collection of documents was compiled by Fr. Daniel Meschter for a youth conference at the St. Nicholas Convent. Read, mark, and inwardly digest! Here is much food for contemplation — and correction.*

### CANONS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

#### *Insights into the mind of the Church regarding Holy Communion*

##### *Of the Holy Apostles*

*Canon IX:* All those faithful who enter and listen to the Scriptures, but do not stay for prayer and Holy Communion, must be excommunicated, on the ground that they are causing the Church a breach of order.

*Canon LII:* If any bishop or presbyter shall refuse to welcome back anyone returning from sin, but, on the contrary, rejects him, let him be deposed from office, since he grieves Christ, who said: "There is joy in heaven over a single sinner who repenteth."

##### *Of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*

*Canon LXVI:* The faithful are required to spend the time in a state of leisure without fail in the holy churches from the holy days of resurrected Christ our God to New Sunday in psalms and hymns, and in spiritual songs called odes, while taking cheer in Christ and celebrating, and paying close attention to the reading of the divine Scriptures, and delighting themselves to their heart's content in the Holy Mysteries. For thus shall we be jointly resurrected and jointly exalted with Christ. Therefore during the days in question let no horse races or other popular spectacle be held at all.

*Canon LXXX:* In case any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or anyone else on the list of the clergy, or any layman, without any graver necessity or any particular difficulty compelling him to absent himself from his own church for a very long time, fails to attend church on Sundays for three consecutive weeks, while living in the city, if he be a cleric, let him be deposed from office; but if he be a layman, let him be removed from Communion.

##### *Of the regional council held in Antioch, in 341 A.D.*

*Canon II:* As for all those persons who enter the church and listen to the sacred Scriptures, but who fail to commune in prayer together and at the same time with the laity, or who shun the participation of the Eucharist, in accordance with some irregularity, we decree that these persons be outcasts from the Church until, after going to confession and exhibiting fruits of repentance and begging forgiveness, they succeed in obtaining a pardon. Furthermore, we decree that communion with those excluded from communion is not allowed, nor in another church is it to be allowed to admit those who have no admittance to another church. If anyone among the bishops, or presbyters, or deacons, or anyone of the Canon, should appear to be communing with those who have been excluded from communion, he too is to be excluded from communion, on the ground of seemingly confusing the Canon of the Church.

##### *Of the regional council held in Carthage, in 418 A.D.*

*Canon VII:* If anybody is in danger and demands to have recourse to the sacred altar for reconciliation when the bishop is absent, the presbyter naturally ought to ask the bishop, and then allow the one in danger to have recourse thereto, in accordance with the bishop's orders.

*Canon CXXII:* It has pleased the Council to decree that whosoever should declare the grace whereby we are justified through Jesus Christ our Lord to be effective only for the remission of sins already perpetrated, and not to afford help by way of preventing perpetration of other sins in addition thereto, let him be anathema.

*Canon CXXIV:* It has further pleased the Council to decree that whosoever should say that the reason why the grace of righteousness has been bestowed upon us is in order that we might through self-mastery be able the more easily and readily to fulfill it through grace, as though indicating that even if the grace had not been given we should still have been able, howbeit not easily and readily, to fulfill the divine commandments without its aid, let him be anathema. For when the Lord was speaking about the fruits of the commandments, He did not say, "Without me ye will have difficulty in doing anything" [*cf.* Jn 15:5].

*Of St. Basil the Great*

*Canon LVIII:* The sentence for a man guilty of having committed adultery is that he shall be excluded from the Holy Elements for fifteen years. These fifteen years shall be allotted to him in the following manner, *to wit:* For four years he shall keep weeping; for five years, listening; for four years, kneeling; for two years, co-standing without Communion.

*Of St. Gregory of Nyssa*

*Canon IV:* ...For any man who on his own initiative and of his own accord proceeds to confess the

sins, the mere fact that he has condescended on account of secret acts to become an accuser of himself as a result of an impulse of his own, is to be considered proof that the cure of the disease has already begun, and since he has shown a sign of improvement, he is entitled to kinder treatment. One, on the other hand, who has been caught in the act of perpetrating the offense, or who has been exposed involuntarily as a result of some suspicion or of some accusation, incurs an intensification of the penalty, when he returns; so that only after he has been purified accurately may he then be admitted to communion of the Sanctified Elements.

*Of St. Nicephorus the Confessor*

*Canon IX:* A priest must administer Communion to a person in danger of dying even though it be after the person in question has eaten.

*Canon XXVII:* A father confessor ought to forbid divine Communion to those persons who confess secret sins to him, but he ought to let them enter the church; and he ought not to reveal their sins, but ought to advise them gently to remain repentant and to keep praying; and he ought to adjust the amercements to befit each one of them according to his best judgment.

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ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

*Homily III on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, (an excerpt, with modifications)*

I observe many partaking of Christ's Body lightly, even thoughtlessly, according to custom and form, rather than consideration and understanding. When the holy season of Lent sets in or when the day of the Lord's Epiphany comes, whatever a man may be, he partakes of the mysteries. And yet it is not the Epiphany, nor is it Lent, that makes a fit time for approaching, but it is sincerity and purity of soul. With this, approach at all times; without it, never. "For as often," says (St. Paul), as you do this, "you proclaim the Lord's death" [I Cor. 11:26], *i.e.*, "you make a remembrance of the salvation that has been wrought for you, and of the benefits which I have bestowed." Consider those who partook of the sacrifices under the old Covenant, how great abstinence did they practice?

How did they not conduct themselves? What did they not perform? They were always purifying themselves. And do you, when you draw nigh to a sacrifice at which the very angels tremble, do you measure the matter by the revolutions of seasons? And how shall you present yourself before the judgment-seat of Christ, you who presume upon His Body with polluted hands and lips? You would not presume to kiss a king with an unclean mouth, and do you kiss the King of heaven with an unclean soul? It is an outrage. Tell me, would you choose to come to the Sacrifice with unwashed hands? No, I suppose not. But you would rather choose not to come at all, than come with soiled hands. And then, thus scrupulous as you are in this little matter, do you come with soiled soul, and thus dare to touch



it? And yet the hands hold it but for a time,<sup>1</sup> whereas into the soul it is dissolved entirely. What, do you not see the holy vessels so thoroughly cleansed all over, so resplendent? Our souls ought to be purer than they, more holy, more brilliant. And why so? Because those vessels are made so for our sakes. They partake not of Him Who is in them, they perceive Him not. But we do; —Yes, verily. Now then, you would not choose to make use of a soiled vessel, and do you approach with a soiled soul? Observe the vast inconsistency of the thing. At the other times you come not, no, not though often you are clean; but at Pascha, however flagrant an act you may have committed, you come. Oh! The force of custom and of prejudice! In vain is the daily Sacrifice;<sup>2</sup> in vain do we stand before the Altar; there is no one to partake. These things I am saying, not to induce you to partake in just any way, but that you should render yourselves worthy to partake. Are you not worthy of the Sacrifice, nor of the participation? If so, then neither are you worthy of the prayer. You hear the deacon, standing, and saying, “As many as are not in penitence, again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.”<sup>3</sup> As many as do not partake are in penitence. If you are one of those who are in penitence, you ought not to partake; for he who does not partake, is one of those who are in penitence. Why then does he say, “Depart, you who are not qualified to pray,” while you have the effrontery to stand still and not depart? But no, you are not of that number, you are of the number of those who are qualified to partake, and yet are indifferent about it, and regard the matter as nothing.

Look, I entreat you: a royal table is set before you; angels minister at that table; the King Himself is there, and do you stand gaping? Are your

garments defiled, and yet do you make no account of it? — or are they clean? Then fall down and partake. Every day He comes in to see the guests, and converse with them all. Yes, at this moment He is speaking to your conscience: “Friends, how stand you here, not having on a wedding garment?”<sup>4</sup> He said not, Why did you sit down? No, before the man who had not on a wedding garment sat down, He declared him to be unworthy, unworthy even to have entered the banquet hall. He does not say, “Why did you sit down to meat,” but, “Why did you come in?” And these are the words that He is at this very moment addressing to one and all of us who stand here with such shameless effrontery. For every one who partakes not of the mysteries is standing here in shameless effrontery. It is for this reason that they who are in sins are first of all commanded to depart; for just as when a master is present at his table, it is not right that those servants who have offended him should be present, but they are sent out of the way: just so also here when the sacrifice is brought forth, and Christ, the Lord’s sheep, is sacrificed; when you hear the words, “Let us complete our prayer unto the Lord,” when you behold the curtains drawn up, then imagine that the Heavens are let down from above, and that the angels are descending!

As then it is not meet that any one of the uninitiated be present, so neither is it appropriate that one of them who are initiated, and yet at the same time defiled, be present.<sup>5</sup> Tell me, suppose any one were invited to a feast, and were to wash his hands, and sit down, and be all ready at the table, and after all refuse to partake of the meal; is he not

<sup>1</sup> There was a time in the early years of the Church when all communicants of the Holy Eucharist took the precious Body of Christ in their hands, as do the clergy who commune at the altar up until this present day.

<sup>2</sup> The daily serving of the Divine Liturgy

<sup>3</sup> In the ancient Church, those who were under penance, i.e. excommunicated for a time for a sin committed, were not allowed to remain in church during the divine liturgy after the reading of the Holy Scripture and the explanatory homily. In other words, they were asked to leave with the catechumens.

<sup>4</sup> St. John is referring to the parable of the royal wedding in the Gospel according to Matthew [22:2-3, 11-13]: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. And when the king came in to see the guests he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

<sup>5</sup> Someone who is initiated is someone enlightened by Holy Baptism, while someone also defiled is one of those from among the penitents.

insulting the man who invited him? Were it not better for such a one never to have come at all? Now it is just in the same way that you have come here. You have sung the Hymn<sup>7</sup> with the rest: you have declared yourself to be of the number of them that are worthy, by not departing with them who are unworthy. Why stay, and yet not partake of the table? I am unworthy, you will say. Then you are also unworthy of that communion you have had in prayers. For it is not by means of the offerings only, but also by means of those liturgical hymns that the Spirit descends all around. Do we not see our own servants first scouring the table with a sponge, and cleaning the house, and then setting out the entertainment? This is what is done by the prayers, by the cry of the deacon. We scour the Church, as it were, with a sponge, that all things may be set out in a pure church, that there may be neither “spot nor wrinkle” [Eph. 5:27]. Unworthy, indeed, are both our eyes of these sights, and unworthy are our ears! ‘And if even a beast,’ it is said, ‘touch the mountain, it shall be stoned’ [Ex.19:13]. Thus then the Israelites were not worthy so much as to set foot on Mt. Sinai as Moses was receiving the commandments from the Lord, and yet afterwards they both came near, and beheld where God had stood. And you may, afterwards, come near, and behold: when, however, He is present, depart. You are no more allowed to be here than is the catechumen. For it is not at all the same thing never to have reached the mysteries, and when you have reached them, to stumble at them and despise them, and to make yourself unworthy of this thing. One might enter upon more points, and those more awful still; not however to burden your understanding, these

<sup>6</sup> “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth: heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!”

will suffice. Those who are not brought to their right senses with the points stated here, certainly will not be brought to their senses with more.

That I may not then be the means of increasing your condemnation, I entreat you, not to refrain from coming, but to render yourselves worthy both of being present, and of approaching. Tell me, were any king to give command and to say, “If any man does this, let him partake of my table;” say, would you not do all you could to be admitted? The Holy Spirit has invited us to heaven, to the table of the great and wonderful King, and do we shrink and hesitate, instead of hastening and running to it? And what then is our hope of salvation? We cannot lay the blame on our weakness; we cannot lay the blame on our nature. It is indolence and nothing else that renders us unworthy.

So far I have spoken according to my own inclinations. But may He Who pricks the heart, He Who gives the Spirit of compunction, pierce your hearts, and plant the seeds in the depth of them, that so through His fear you may conceive, and bring forth the spirit of salvation, and come near with boldness. For “thy sons,” it is said, are “like young olive trees round about thy table” [Ps.127:4]. Oh, then, let there be in us nothing old, nothing wild, nothing harsh. For it is the young trees that are fit for fruit, for the beautiful fruit, fruit, I mean, of the olive-tree. And thriving they are, so as all to be round about the table, and to come together here, not in vain or by chance, but with fear and reverence. For thus shall you behold with boldness even Christ Himself in heaven, and shall be counted worthy of that heavenly kingdom, which God grant we may all attain in Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom with the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, and honor, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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*From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume XIII, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983, pp. 63-65*

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From the *Introduction to Spiritual Counsels*:<sup>1</sup> The nineteenth century in Russia was a time of considerable religious revival, and one of the most notable features of this revival was the way in which many thousands of ordinary people, of all classes and callings, flocked for spiritual advice — and, indeed, for temporal advice also — to elders or *startsi*, who exercised in this way a remarkable ministry. But whereas the *startsi* — among whom special mention must be made of the greatest of them all, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, and the several great spiritual directors of the monastery of Optino — were all monks, the last of the famous spiritual teachers of imperial Russia was a married parish priest. On the eve of the revolutionary upheaval, in which the Russian Church was to be tried in the fires of a persecution unequalled in extent or fury by anything the church had suffered in sixteen centuries, it was no monk, but the ‘ordinary’ priest of an ‘ordinary’ parish, no elder in some sheltered conventual retreat, but a man who had to find Christ in the rush and bustle — and the squalor and misery — of a great seaport, whom God sent as a sign to his children, to strengthen them for the horrors to come. And the teaching reflects the man and his circumstances — it is as down to earth, yet as caught up to heaven, as the man himself: intensely practical, intensely demanding — and, inescapably, possible for all.

(Father John) lived in a barely furnished cottage on the seaboard, whence he was soon unable to emerge without being attended by a crowd, which would wait at the door of his house, or of the cathedral, and follow him through the streets. Early each morning, after a period of intense prayer before an icon at home, he would go to church — as usual, through a crowd — and there sing the liturgy in a deep, clear and powerful voice: for normally he celebrated the Eucharist — or at least communicated — every day. Afterwards he would pay twelve or fifteen sick calls, fulfill teaching engagements, and often go into Saint Petersburg for similar purposes, for his renown as a powerful intercessor and healer grew very rapidly, and spread throughout the country. Every moment he received appeals for spiritual and material assistance, and never was such an appeal unanswered; daily he received scores of visitors, and hundreds of letters, while the crowds pressed round him wherever

he appeared — in the streets of Kronstadt or Saint Petersburg, at the railway stations, everywhere. . . . He himself declared that only by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ every day was he enabled to accomplish a task otherwise beyond human powers. When he came to partake of the blessed sacrament he would be utterly transfigured — all weariness, all burden of trouble and sorrow gone, and every line of his face reflecting an extraordinary spiritual joy, heavenly peace, and a great feeling of strength and power. Is it any wonder that his church was packed to the doors, Sundays and weekdays alike? The great cathedral of Saint Andrew at Kronstadt could hold seven thousand people, and when Father John celebrated the liturgy it was so crowded that, as the Russian saying has it, “even an apple could not have found room to fall to the ground.”

What of Father John’s convinced and ardent sacramentalism, and in particular his insistence on frequent offering and partaking of the Eucharist? It contrasted sharply with the common practice of the day, the sour fruit of what I have called the conventional tradition; did it also contrast with that of the monastic-mystical tradition? This is not an easy question to answer, for the latter has varied considerably. The great fourteenth-century Greek exponent and defender of hesychasm, Saint Gregory Palamas, and his close associate Nicholas Cabasilas, were both thoroughly and emphatically sacramentalist; and Cabasilas, moreover, is one of the most noted of Orthodox liturgical writers. Nor was the practice of frequent communion without its witnesses among their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century successors: Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain defended it so ardently that he got himself into trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities; there are plenty of references to the eucharist in the letters of the *startsi* and several of the elders of Optino communicated daily, at certain periods of their life, as did Saint Seraphim.

(Father John) understood all that he did, all that he achieved, as a manifestation of sacramental grace, fighting evil in all its forms. And what is true of his own life is true also of his teaching: it is marked by a clear insistence on the centrality in the Christian life of ordained means of grace, and it is perhaps this above all else which marks him out as a sure spiritual

guide for the ordinary man or woman trying to live the Christian life in the world.

This insistence on giving the sacraments their proper place was Father John's greatest legacy to the Orthodox Church, and the Russian Church in particular, and it was manifest not only in his teaching, but also in his pastoral practice. I have already remarked upon his daily celebration of the liturgy; he himself said that not to celebrate the liturgy was to him as death. Moreover, in sharp contrast with the prevailing custom of very infrequent communion, he insisted that all who worshipped with him should communicate with him also.

But sacraments are not magic, and none has emphasized this more clearly than did Father John. For a man to partake of them fruitfully, he must make himself as fit to do so as he can, by prayer, mortification, and good works. And these in their turn he cannot accomplish without the grace of God: and of that, again, he cannot avail himself without faith, itself a divine gift. Father John realized vividly the utter dependence of man on God, and the utter love of God for man; that man without God can do nothing, and that man with God can do everything is the keynote of all his teaching, and it is linked with an insistence on the absolute necessity of faith. Faith is the absolute prerequisite to all else, the absolutely indispensable foundation of all prayer, all good works. Faith, however, is not something which comes automatically — it has to be prayed for.

EXCERPTS FROM ST JOHN OF KRONSTADT'S DIARIES <sup>2</sup>

Pg. 239: The means of confirming and strengthening Christian hope in us are — prayer, especially frequent sincere prayer, the confession of our sins, the frequent reading of the Word of God, and, above all, the frequent communion of the Holy Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Pg. 25: If you experience a feeling of hunger or thirst, and wish to eat and drink, think of the hunger or thirst of the soul (it thirsts after righteousness, for justification, Christ, for sanctification), which, if you do not satisfy, your soul may die from hunger, crushed by the passions, weakened and exhausted; and in satisfying your bodily hunger, do not forget

to appease, above all and before all, your spiritual hunger, by conversing with God, by heart-felt repentance for your sins, by reading the story and precepts of the Gospel, and especially by the communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Pg. 219: In receiving the Holy Sacrament be as undoubtingly sure that you communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ, as you are sure that every moment you breathe air. Say to yourself, "As surely as I constantly breathe the air, so surely do I now receive into myself, together with the air, my Lord Jesus Christ Himself, my breathing, my life, my joy, my salvation. He is my breath, before air, at every moment of my life; He is my word, before any other word; He is my thought, before any other thought; He is my light, before any other light; He is my meat and drink, before any other meat and drink; He is my raiment, before any other raiment; He is my fragrance, before any other fragrance; He is my sweetness, before any other sweetness; He is my father and mother, before any other father and mother; before the earth, He is the firmest ground, that nothing can ever shake and that bears me. As we, earthly creatures, forget that at all times we breathe, live, move, and exist in Him and have "hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns" [Jer 2:13], for ourselves, He has opened unto us, in His Holy Mysteries, in His Blood, the source of living water, flowing into life eternal, and gives Himself to us as food and drink, in order "that we might live through Him" ([I Jn 4:9].

Pg. 95: "He Who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him" [Jn 6:56]. As an infant borne in his mother's womb lives wholly by her, so also the Christian partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ dwells in Christ, as an infant in his mother's womb, and lives wholly by Christ. "As I live by the Father, so he who eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" [Jn 6:57].

<sup>1</sup> *The Spiritual Counsels Of Father John Of Kronstadt: Select Passages from My Life In Christ* edited and introduced by W. Jardine Grisbrooke, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1967

<sup>2</sup> *My Life In Christ*, Part II; Jordanville NY, 1963



FROM THE LETTERS OF THE MOST BLESSED METROPOLITAN ANTHONY KHRAPOVITSKY  
ON HOLY COMMUNION  
(Jordanville NY, 1988)

(1) "In his last years, Vladyka Anthony already could neither walk nor stand on his legs and they carried him every Sunday and feast day to church, where he unfailingly communed of the Holy Mysteries and gave a sermon." (p. 117)

Following are quotations from these last sermons of the great first hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad:

Vespers sticheron from "*Lord I have cried...*," Day of the Holy Spirit (the kneeling prayers service)

*"The Holy spirit is the Light and Life, and living source of intellect; the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding; good, right, intellectual; ruling, cleansing offenses; Deity and Deifier, Fire proceeding from Fire; speaking, working, distributing gifts; by Whom all the prophets and the divine apostles together with the martyrs were crowned. O strange report, strange sight! Fire is distributed for the bestowal of gifts."*

(2) On the Day of the Holy Spirit, Vladyka said, "*Fire proceeding from Fire* — this is the Grace of the Holy Spirit, burning up as with fire all that is impure, so that there remains gold alone. Every man who touches this fire himself is set aflame. Likewise every man touching the fire of sin catches fire. In this sense, the fire of sin and the Holy Fire have something in common: a man begins to burn with that fire with which he comes into contact. The holy fathers burned with the Holy Fire. Of course, it is not for us to understand such fervor, such an outpouring of Grace, as that which the righteous acquired, such that the Holy Fire blazed in their hearts; for us, there happen only moments of tender openness of soul; then our hearts are enkindled with the Holy Fire. In proportion to the frequency of such moments, this Fire gradually becomes our own. We commune with it when partaking of the Holy Gifts, and during heartfelt

prayer. Then that longed-for spiritual state comes upon us, in which the Apostle Peter found himself during the Holy Transfiguration of the Lord when he said, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias' [Matt. 17:4]. He wished to remain ever in such a state as this, that the Divine Fire never left him. About this we pray to the Lord, when we say, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me....' [pp. 120-121]

(3) "For a man approaching the Holy Mysteries, the help of Grace is especially necessary, because as much as the devil fears Christ, he is accordingly brazen in his assaults. How many times have pious people lamented being suddenly assaulted by feelings of anger, or by impure thoughts, before Holy Communion? Even on the night of Christ's betrayal, the devil was quick to dart in among the holy apostles, despite Christ's proximity which itself powerfully distanced Satan from them. Thus does he burst into the very altar itself. Accordingly, the Church accompanies Holy Communion with so many prayers, to safeguard the priest as well as the layman from assaults of the devil. People capable of entering openly into struggle with the devil, as, for example, John of Kronstadt, have said that at the moment of the priest's communing, the devil buzzes about the priest and the altar, and woe to all, if the priest fails to hold his ground. Neither be confused nor be afraid; for where sin abounds, grace does much more abound [Rom. 5:20]. Do not be dismayed; these assaults are not a sin, but only temptation — worldly life waves its arms in a person's face, enticing him to sin. Before Holy Communion, as on the feast of Pascha, the devil always tries to waylay us with some unpleasantness, in order to trouble the soul and incite it to sin. The soul is always subject to temptations, and the more strongly they work upon it, the more readily the soul gives itself sooner to sin." (p. 122)

THE DOGMATIC BASIS FOR HOLY COMMUNION  
*The Mystery (Sacrament) of the Eucharist*

The Eucharist (literally “thanksgiving”) is the Mystery in which the bread and wine of offering are changed by the Holy Spirit into the true Body and true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then the believers receive communion of them for a most intimate union with Christ and eternal life. This Mystery is composed, thus, of two separate moments:

- 1) the changing or transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord, and
- 2) the Communion of these Holy Gifts.

*The Eucharist is the greatest Christian Mystery  
(Sacrament).*

The Savior’s Words before the Establishment of the Mystery

Before the first performance of this Mystery at the Mystical Supper (the Last Supper), Christ promised it in His conversation concerning the Bread of Life on the occasion of the feeding of the five thousand men with five loaves. The Lord taught, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world* [Jn 6:51]. The Jews evidently understood the words of Christ literally. They began to say to each other, *How can this man give us His flesh to eat?* [Jn 6:52]. And the Lord did not tell the Jews that they had understood Him incorrectly, but only with greater force and clarity He continued to speak with the same meaning: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him* [Jn 6:53-56].

His disciples also understood the words of Christ literally: *This is a hard saying; who can hear it?* [Jn 6:60], they said. The Savior, so as to convince them of the possibility of such a miracu-

lous eating, indicated another miracle, the miracle of His future Ascension into Heaven: *Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascending where He was before?* [Jn 6:61-62]. Further Christ adds, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life* [Jn 6:63]. By this remark Christ does not ask that His words about the Bread of Life be understood in any “metaphorical” meaning. *There are some of you that believe not*, He added immediately [Jn 6:64]. By these words the Savior Himself indicates that His words are difficult for faith: How is it that believers will eat His Body and drink His Blood? But He confirms that He speaks of His actual Body. His words concerning His Body and Blood are “spirit and life.” They testify that

- a) he who partakes of them will have eternal life, and will be resurrected for the Kingdom of glory in the last day; and
- b) that he who partakes of them will enter into the most intimate communion with Christ. His words speak not of life in the flesh, but of life in the Spirit.

*The Establishment of the Mystery*

The very establishment of the Mystery is set forth in three evangelists, the synoptics Matthew, Mark and Luke, and then is repeated by the Apostle Paul.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, in the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter, it is said: *As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is My Body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* [Matt. 26:26-28].

The same thing is said in the Gospel of Mark in the fourteenth chapter.

In the Gospel of Luke, the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter, we read: *And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is My Body which*



*is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new testament in My Blood, which is shed for you [Lk 22:19-20].*

The same thing that the Evangelist Luke says we read in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, only with prefatory words: *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My Blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me [I Cor. 11:23-25].*

*The Changing of the Bread and Wine in the  
Mystery of the Eucharist*

In the Mystery of the Eucharist, at the time when the priest, invoking the Holy Spirit upon the offered Gifts, blesses them with the prayer to God the Father: “Make this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ; and that which is in this cup, the precious Blood of Thy Christ; changing them by Thy Holy Spirit” — the bread and wine actually are changed into the Body and Blood by the coming down of the Holy Spirit. After this moment, although our eyes see bread and wine on the Holy Table, in their very essence, invisibly for sensual eyes, this is the true Body and true Blood of the Lord Jesus, only under the “forms” of bread and wine.

*Protopresbyter Michael Pomozansky, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Platina, 1983, pp. 275-279 (in English)*

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EXCERPTS FROM THE PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

*(from The Order of Preparation for Holy Communion, Jordanville, 1988)*

*I — of St. Basil the Great:* Wherefore, even I, although unworthy of heaven and earth, and of this temporal life, having submitted my whole self to sin, and made myself a slave of pleasure, and having defaced Thine image, yet being Thy work and creation, wretched though I be, I despair not of my salvation, and dare to approach Thine immeasurable loving-kindness. Do Thou cleanse me from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and teach me to achieve holiness in fear of Thee; that with the pure testimony of my conscience, receiving a portion of Thy Holy Things, I may be united unto Thy holy Body and Blood, and have Thee living and abiding in me with the Father and Thy Holy Spirit. Grant me until my last breath to receive without condemnation the portion of Thy Holy Things, unto communion with the Holy Spirit, as a provision for life eternal, for an acceptable defense at Thy dread judgment seat.

*II — of St. John Chrysostom:* Let the fiery coal of Thy most holy Body and Thy precious Blood be unto me for sanctification and enlightenment, and

health for my lowly soul and body, unto the lightening of the burden of my many sins, for preservation from every act of the devil, for the expulsion and prohibition of mine evil and wicked habits, unto the mortification of the passions, unto the keeping of Thy commandments, unto the application of Thy divine grace, unto the acquiring of Thy kingdom, ...that I may not by much abstaining from Thy communion become the prey of the spiritual wolf.

*IV — of St. John of Damascus:* Vouchsafe me to partake without condemnation of Thy divine, glorious, immaculate, and life-giving Mysteries; not as a burden, nor for punishment, nor for an increase of sins, but unto purification and sanctification, and as a pledge of the life and kingdom to come, as a bulwark and help, and for the destruction of enemies, and for the blotting out of my many transgressions.

*V — of St. Basil the Great:* Taking courage from Thy compassion I approach Thee Who hast said: He

who eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.

*VI — of St. Symeon the New Theologian:* See my lowliness, see my toil, O God of all; that with a pure heart, a trembling mind, and a contrite soul I may partake of Thy spotless and most holy Mysteries, by

which all who eat and drink in purity of heart are quickened and deified, that I may not remain alone without Thee, that Thou mayest remain, as Thou hast said, with me. With sympathetic mercy Thou dost purify and illumine those who fervently repent, and makest them partakers of the light, sharers of Thy divinity without stint.

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## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

*St. John Chrysostom*

I behold a new and wondrous mystery!

My ears resound to the shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but loudly chanting a heavenly hymn!

The angels sing!

The archangels blend their voices in harmony!

The cherubim resound their joyful praise!

The seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead herein...on earth and man in heaven.

He who is above now, for our salvation, dwells here below; and we, who were lowly, are exalted by divine mercy!

Today Bethlehem resembles heaven, hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices and, in place of the sun, witnessing the rising of the Sun of Justice!

Ask not how this is accomplished, for where God wills, the order of nature is overturned. For He willed. He had the powers. He descended. He saved. All things move in obedience to God.

Today He Who Is, is born! And He Who Is becomes what He was not! For when He was God, He became man — while not relinquishing the Godhead that is His...

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King Who has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him angels, nor archangels, nor thrones, nor dominions, nor powers, nor principalities — but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His incarnation has He ceased being God. And behold, kings have come, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven;

Women, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of childbirth into joy;

Virgins, to the Son of the Virgin...

Infants, that they might adore Him who became a little child, so that out of the mouths of infants He might perfect praise;

Children, to the Child who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod;

Men, to Him Who became man that He might heal the miseries of His servants;

Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd who was laid down His life for His sheep;

Priests, to Him Who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek;

Servants, to Him Who took upon Himself the form of a servant, that He might bless our stewardship with the reward of freedom [Phil 2:7];

Fishermen, to the Fisher of humanity;

Publicans, to Him Who from among them named a chosen evangelist;

Sinful women, to Him Who exposed His feet to the tears of the repentant woman;



And that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world!

Since, therefore, all rejoice, I too desire to rejoice! I too wish to share the choral dance, to celebrate the festival!

But I take my part, not plucking the harp nor with the music of the pipes nor holding a torch, but holding in my arms the cradle of Christ!

For this is all my hope!

This is my life!

This is my salvation!

This is my pipe, my harp!

And bearing it I come, and having from its power received the gift of speech, I too, with the angels and shepherds, sing:

“Glory to God in the Highest! and on earth peace to men of good will!”

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*(Book search, continued from p. 2)*

The Instructions of St. Pachomius

Rule of St. Pachomius [or] The Asketikon

Homily on Prayer; St. Aphraates

Eastern Orthodox Saints; Sabine Baring-Gould

Life of St. Alexander Nevsky

The Life of Sts. Cyprian and Justina

Life of St. Ephraim the Syrian

The Suffering of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia

Encomium on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste  
St. Basil the Great

Life of St. Hilarion and St. Paul the First Hermit  
St. Jerome

Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow, The Apostle of Alaska;  
Charles R. Hale

St. Juliana of Nicomedia

St. Margaret of Antioch

Schemamonk Mark of Sarov

Life of St. Moses the Black

Life of St. Nicholas

Life of St. Onuphrius

Life of St. Panteleimon

Hieroschemamonk Parthenius, Elder of the Kiev Caves  
Larva

Tripartite Life of St. Patrick

Life and Miracles of St. Pitirim of Tambov

Martyrdom of St. Polycarp

Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, and the Epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians

Seven Holy Sleepers of Ephesus

The Life of St. Simon Stylites

St. Susanna

An Early Christian Martyrology: The Names of Our Lords the Confessors and Victors and The Days on Which They Gained Their Crowns; William Wright, translator

Martyrology or Felire of St. Aengus

Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch

Holy Orthodox Church: Its Rituals, Services and Sacraments

The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints; J.P. Kirsch

On the Incarnation of the Word; St. Athanasius the Great

Eustratios Argenti: Study of the Greek Church Under Turkish Rule; Bishop Kallistos Ware

Instructions in God's Law; Peter Smirnoff

Confession of Dositheus; also called  
The Acts of the Council of Jerusalem

Reply of the Orthodox Church to Roman Catholic Overtures on Reunion [1895]

Encyclical Epistle of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

History of the Arians; St. Athanasius the Great

Homily on Paradise; St. Basil the Great

Five Instructions on the Sacraments  
St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Concerning the Mysteries; St. Ambrose

On Mortality - A Christian Preparation for Death  
*St. Cyprian*

On Works and Alms; *St. Cyprian of Carthage*

Patrology: The Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church; *Otto Bardenhewer*; 3 Volume set

Russian Missions in China and Japan; *Charles Hale*

The Orthodox Missionary Society of Russia: an Historical Account of its Foundation

Anglican-Orthodox Inter-communion  
*Bishop Raphael*

Encyclical Epistle of St. Mark of Ephesus

Encyclical Epistle of the Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church

The Reply of the Orthodox Churches to Roman Catholic Overtures on Reunion - Ecumenism or Truth

Mormon' Origins, an Eyewitness Account

The Veneration of Icons; *St. John of Damascus*

Iconmakers Handbook of the Stroganov School of Icon-painting

Antichrist, The Second Coming of the Lord, The End of the World  
*St. Ephraim the Syrian and St. John of Damascus*

Antichrist; *St. Hippolytus*

The Sacrament of Matrimony According to the Doctrine and Ritual of the Eastern Orthodox Church; *Archpriest F. Basaroff*

Christ is Risen: The Paschal Sermons of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow

Duties of Parish Priests; *Bishop George Konissky of Mogileff, assisted by Bishop Parthenius Sopkofsky of Smolensk*

Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land

St Patrick and the Daughters of Loaghaire

Monastic Rule of St. Carthage

The Rule of St. Cormac

Rule of Ailbhe

The Voyage of St. Brendan

St. Cuimmin's Poem on the Saints of Ireland

Life of St. Cuthbert; *Translated by W. Forbes-Leith*

Life of St. Finan of Lock Leyn

Altus of St. Columba

Saltair na Rann

*The following are leaflets or very small booklets; they would also be much appreciated.*

The Decalogue; *St. Gregory Palamas*

Purity; *Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov*

Duties of Parents and Children; *St. John Chrysostom*

Abortion: An Orthodox Perspective

Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy Before the Face of Antichrist;  
*Archimandrite Constantine*

Remember the Second Coming of Christ  
*St. Ephraim the Syrian*

Is It Sufficient Only to Believe in Christ in Order to be Saved?; *St. Theophan the Recluse*

Encyclical Letter of St. Mark of Ephesus

The Departure of the Soul and How it is Separated from the Body; *St. Marcarius the Alexandrian*

Prayer for the Dead

Angels; *Bishop Nicolai Velimirovich*

Angels and the Other Heavenly Bodiless Powers  
*St. Dimitry of Rostov*

Concerning the Sign of the Cross

Orthodox Faith and Practice

How One Should Pray in Church

Tradition in the Eastern Orthodox Church

The Veneration of Icons; *St. John Damascus*

The Basis for the Veneration of Saints  
*L. Paevsky*

True Church of Christ; *Fr. Sebastian Dabovich*

What is the Orthodox Church

Shorter Catechism of the Orthodox Church

What is the Good of Religion to Me?

How to Save the Soul  
*Bishop Theophan the Recluse*

Do Not Judge Others - Judge Yourself

Spiritual Counsels of Starets Parthenius  
*Starets Parthenius [Parfeny]*

On Tears; *Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov*

On Asceticism; *St. Basil the Great*

Prelest, the Teaching of the Holy Fathers on Spiritual Self-Deception

Selected Texts on Prayer; *St. Nilus of Sinai*



Some Aspects of Orthodox Spirituality

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On Bearing Grudges; *St. Tikhon of Zadonsk*

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Confession — Questions for the Penitent

Confession; Translated from a pamphlet originally issued on Mt. Athos.

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How a Christian Should Pray  
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Prayers for the Sick

Prayer for the Dead

The Daily Prayer of Hieroschemamonk Parthenius

Prayer for the Acceptance of God's Will

Prayer of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow

Prayer Life for the Beginner  
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Prayer of Intercession

Concerning the Jesus Prayer

Prayer to the Holy Fathers of Optina

Service to a Fool for Christ's Sake  
Taken from the General Menaion.

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(*Abp. Averky, continued from p. 13*)

“Living Church” in Soviet Russia as legal, and now recognize the Pope of Rome as the “head of the whole Christian Church,” and even admit the papist Latins to Holy Communion without their first being united to the holy Orthodox Church.

Such are all those who actively participate in the so-called Ecumenical Movement, which is striving so blatantly to create some sort of new pseudo-church out of all the denominations now existing.

Such, too, are those many others who are not completely faithful to our Lord and Savior and His

holy Church, but serve His vicious enemies or please them in one way or another by helping them to realize their anti-Christian goals in a world which has turned away from God.

Who will dare to deny us our lawful right not to recognize such people as Orthodox, even though they may persist in using that name and bearing various high ranks and titles?

From Church history, we know that there have been not a few heretics and even heresiarchs of high rank who were solemnly condemned by the



Universal Church and removed from their offices.

But what do we see today? This, sadly, is an age of unlimited concessions and sly collaboration, when even the most scandalous heretical actions or statements disturb hardly anyone. Very few react to this manifest apostasy from Orthodoxy as they should; as for condemning these new heretics and apostates — there is no point in even thinking about it. Today everything is permitted for everyone, and nothing is prohibited for anyone — except in those cases where someone is personally hurt, offended or insulted when his own folly is pointed out. Oh, in such cases, this is unforgivable! Then threats make their appearance, based on those forgotten canons, which otherwise are “obsolete, outdated and unacceptable” in our advanced, progressive age!

This is the kind of moral disintegration, of real spiritual monstrosity, which faces us. The truth is readily ignored and brazenly flouted, while evil, just as readily, celebrates its triumphant victory and gloatingly mocks the truth which it has overthrown and trampled upon.

Is it possible to reconcile one's conscience to this contemporary situation? Can one close his eyes to all those lies and falsehoods and calmly act as if he saw nothing wrong?

Only individuals whose consciences are burned out or completely lost can do so! That is why it is more than strange to hear some, imagining themselves to be Orthodox, call the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia “Old Believer”, “schismatic”, “Black Hundredist”,\* “retrograde”, “obscurantist”, and so on, simply because we will not walk in step with these times and dare not to apostatize in anything from Christ's Gospel and the original teaching of the holy Church, and therefore consider it an obligation of conscience to condemn this clear and obvious evil of contemporary life which has already penetrated into the Church.

In fact, it is not we who are schismatic, but all those who follow the spirit of these times and by that act cut themselves off from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, apostatizing from the Faith of the Fathers, from the Orthodox Faith, which established the whole world.... These people are obviously hurtling over the precipice of apostasy —

into the abyss of perdition, together with the whole contemporary world, burying themselves in their apostasy from the life-creating God. Do you hear the Apostle's divinely inspired words, you modernists, attempting to distort Christ's Gospel and becoming so readily and zealously “conformed to this world”, evil and alluring as it is?

We readily accept your indictment that we are “old believers”, considering it an honor to our traditionalism. But how does your Christian conscience get on with your innovating, which essentially overthrows the ancient, true Faith and Christ's unchanging Church?

Was it not the Apostle who warned all Christians: “Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” [Rom 12:2].

We are “old believers”, but not schismatics, for we have never cut ourselves off from the true Church of Christ. We are in union with our Head, Christ the Savior, with His holy disciples and apostles, with the apostolic fathers, with the great fathers and teachers of the Church, and with the great luminaries and pillars of the Faith and piety in our fatherland, Holy Russia. But you are in union with some sort of innovating, self-appointed teachers, whom you advertise everywhere so unlawfully and obstinately, disparaging and at time even daring to criticize the genuine luminaries of our holy Church, who have pleased God and been glorified in many ascetic struggles of piety and miracles throughout the course of her two-thousand year history.

This being the case, which of us is really the schismatic?

Of course it is not those in the spirit of traditional Orthodoxy, but those who have apostatized from the true Faith of Christ and rejected the genuine spirit of Christian piety, even though all the contemporary patriarchs, who have altered our

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\* Literally, “black hundreders”. The “black hundreds” were a patriotic, anti-revolutionary organization in pre-revolutionary Russia. Popular slander equates them with the irresponsible mobs which carried out pogroms. In fact, the black hundreds were Church-sponsored and opposed to any sort of brutality.



age-old patristic Orthodoxy may be on the latter's side, as well as the majority of contemporary so-called Christians.

Indeed, Christ the Savior did not promise eternal salvation to the majority; quite to the contrary, He promised it to His "little flock" which will remain faithful to Him to the end, in the day of His glorious and terrible Second Coming, when He will come "to judge the living and the dead."

"Fear not, little flock," He said, painting the frightening picture of the last times of apostasy from God and persecution of the Faith before our mind's eye, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" [Lk 12:32].

This is why all we have said above prompts us to re-examine the terminology which has been accepted up to the present. It is insufficient in our time to say only "Christian" — now it is necessary to qualify this by saying "true-Christian". Similarly it is insufficient to say "Orthodox" — it is essential to emphasize that one is not referring to an innovating modernist "Orthodox", but to a true Orthodox.

All genuine zealots of the true Faith, serving Christ the Savior alone, have already begun to do this, both those in our fatherland, enslaved by ferocious enemies of God, where zealots depart into the catacombs like the ancient Christians, as well as in Greece, our brother nation, where the "Old Calendarists" not only refuse to accept the new calendar, but also reject all innovations of any kind. They have a special veneration for that champion of holy Orthodoxy, St. Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus, thanks to whose steadfastness the impious Union of Florence with papal Rome in 1439 failed.\*

In our firm stand for the true Faith and Church it is essential only to avoid everything personal — pride and self-exaltation, which inevitably lead to new errors, and eventually even to a fall; we have

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\* It is noteworthy that both the Catacomb Church in the USSR ["Tikhonites" — neither name to be confused with the contemporary group in Russia and elsewhere using or referred to by those names — *ed.*] and the Greek Old Calendarists, between whom there can hardly be any communication, have begun to call themselves "True Orthodox Christians".

already witnessed this in several cases. It is not ourselves we should praise, but the pure and immaculate Faith of Christ. No fanaticism is admissible here, because it is capable of blinding the spiritual eyes of such as are "zealous not according to knowledge." Rather than confirming one in the Faith, this blind fanaticism can sometimes lead one away from it.

It is important to know and to remember that a true Orthodox Christian is not someone who just accepts the dogmas of Orthodoxy formally, but one who, as our great Russian hierarch St. Tikhon of Zadonsk taught so beautifully, *thinks* in an Orthodox way, *feels* in an Orthodox way, and *lives* in an Orthodox way, incarnating the spirit of Orthodoxy into his life. This spirit-ascetic and world-renouncing, as is clearly set forth in the word of God and the teachings of the holy fathers — this is most sharply and boldly denied by the modernists, the "neo-Orthodox", who want everything to keep in step with the spirit of this world lying in evil, whose prince, in the words of the Lord Himself, is none other than the devil [Jn 12:31]. Thus it is not God Whom they desire to please, but the "prince of this world", the devil; they thereby cease to be true Orthodox Christians, even if they call themselves such.

If we consider all this more seriously and deeply, then we will see that this is precisely the case, and that modernism with its innovations is leading us away from Christ and His true Church. Let us be horrified at how rapidly apostasy has proceeded, although the modernists do not see it or feel it, for they themselves are taking an active part in it.

And so let us not fear to remain in the minority, far from all their high-sounding titles and ranks. Let us always remember that even Caiaphas was a high priest of the true God, and to what depths he sank — to the horrible sin of deicide!

While living in this world which has apostatized from God, let us strive not for specious human glory and cheap popularity, which will not save us, but only to be within Christ's "little flock".

*Let us be True Orthodox Christians, not modernists!*